



Community Development

MICROENTERPRISE HOME KITCHEN OPERATION (MEHKO) QUICK FACTS

A Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation (MEHKO) is a type of food service, like a mini restaurant, that is operated by a resident in a private home where food is stored, handled, and prepared and then served to customers. Below are quick facts about the MEHKO requirements, limitations, and the steps needed to start a MEHKO in the City of El Cajon.



Images Courtesy of County of San Diego DEHQ MEHKO Quick Facts

MEHKO Requirements

- A City of El Cajon business license is required.
- A permit from the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health & Quality is required.
- One full-time food employee, (not including a family member or household member) may work at the MEHKO.
- The MEHKO operator must successfully pass an approved and accredited food safety manager certification examination. Also, any person(s) involved with the MEHKO must complete food handler training.
- Food must be prepared, cooked, and served on the same day.
- Customers may dine at your home, get takeout, or have their food delivered.
- Only an employee of the MEHKO, or a family member, may deliver food to the consumer.
- Only one MEHKO can be permitted per residence. This must be the primary residence of the MEHKO operator.

MEHKO Limitations

- Food preparation is limited to a maximum of 30 meals per day or 60 meals per week, with an annual sales cap of \$50,000.
- No signage or other outdoor displays for advertising are allowed.
- Food from a MEHKO cannot be sold to other food facilities.
- A MEHKO cannot also operate as a Cottage Food Operator and may not cater or serve as a commissary for mobile food facilities.
- MEHKOs may not create nuisance conditions:
 - Blocking the street
 - Grease build-up or storage in a manner that creates a fire hazard or attracts vermin
 - Grease disposal via sewer system is prohibited – no grease down the drain
 - Generate excessive smoke, odors or noise
 - Store refuse in an unsanitary manner
 - Serving alcohol without a license

MEHKO Resources

City of El Cajon Finance Department (Business License):

<https://www.elcajon.gov/your-government/departments/finance/business-licenses>

County of San Diego MEHKO website:

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh_preprod/fhd/food/homekitchenoperations.html

State of California Alcoholic Beverage Control MEHKO website:

<https://www.abc.ca.gov/micro-enterprise-home-kitchens-mehks-faq/>

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